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Turner, Stansfield

Dec. 1, 1923- Director of Central Intelligence. Address: b. Central Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C. 20505

Nine directors have preceded Admiral Stansfield Turner in the Central Intelligence Agency since its establishment in 1947. But Turner is the first Director of Central Intelligence to have budget control over the several agencies that form the United States intelligence community and the explicit authority to assign and coordinate intelligence collection tasks. Increased power was accorded him in an executive order signed by President Jimmy Carter in January 1978 as part of a reorganization plan that had as one of its purposes the rehabilitation of the CIA, which in recent years has been beleagured by revelations of abuses of its mandate and by security leaks. Turner, who became the CIA director in February 1977, is an urbane Navy man of strong intellectual bent, a former Rhodes scholar, destroyer commander, systems analyst, writer on naval strategy, president of the Naval War College, and fleet and area commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Stansfield Turner was born on December 1, 1923 in Chicago, Illinois, one of two children of Oliver Stansfield Turner and Wilhelmina Josephine (Wagner) Turner. The other child was named Twain. His father was born at Ramsbottom, Lancashire, England, came to the United States in 1909 at the age of ten, entered the real estate business six years later, and by 1929 had risen to the vice-presidency of a Chicago real estate firm. The family's home was in the well-to-do suburb of Highland Park, where Stansfield attended high school.

At Amherst College, in which he enrolled in 1941, Turner took part in student politics, served as president of his class, played football, and became a member of the Naval Reserve. One of his friends and classmates, William H. Webster, is now director of the FBI. After two years at Amherst, Turner transferred to the United States Naval Academy, where he made his mark as an outstanding student, brigade commander, and left guard on the football squad. He and Jimmy Carter were in the same class at Annapolis, but, according to the President, they did not know each other. "He was so far ahead of us," Carter told his Cabinet in a comment on his nomination of Turner, "that we never considered him competition, or even a peer." Although they were members of the class of 1947, they graduated in 1946 under an accelerated program adopted during World War II, with Turner finishing 25th in the class of 820, while Carter ranked 59th.

After a year aboard a cruiser, Turner went to Oxford University as a Rhodes scholar, studying philosophy, politics, and economics, and obtained his M.A. degree in 1950. Returning to sea, he served on destroyers in both the Atlantic and Pacific and earned a Bronze Star and other service decorations in the Korean war. His assignments at sea, including his commands of the USS *Conquest* from 1956 to 1958 and the USS *Rowan* in 1962, alternated with tours of duty in the politico-military division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations and in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Systems Analysis. The Navy also assigned him to a period of study in the advanced management program at Harvard Business School.

As Turner gradually advanced through the naval grades, acquiring a reputation as an effective and open-minded officer and administrator, his assignments grew more sensitive and important. In 1967, with the rank of commander, he directed the USS *Horne*, a guided missile frigate, off the coast of Vietnam. Moving up to captain, he served for the next two years as executive assistant and military aide to Secretary of the Navy Paul Ignatius, advising on budget, manpower, and other matters. He was awarded his two stars as rear admiral, assisted Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr., Chief of Naval Operations, on a Navy modernization project, and assumed command of a carrier task group of the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean in 1970.

During the early 1970's Turner's assignments continued to increase in responsibility, and he was mentioned from time to time

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as a possible future chief of naval operations. In 1971 he was named to head the systems analysis division in the office of the chief of naval operations and the following year, shortly after receiving the third star of a vice-admiral, was appointed president of the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. With typical independent-mindedness, Turner dispensed with uniforms at the college, ordered extensive revisions in the curriculum to increase, for example, the reading requirements, beginning with Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, and called for examinations in strategy and tactics, analysis and management. The students' year at the college was decidedly not to be a year on the beach. He cautioned in a college address that if the military did not shape up, "the think tanks will be doing our thinking for us." He invited a variety of provocative speakers to seminars and lectures that he organized. One guest was his friend, Herman Wouk, author of *The Caine Mutiny;* another was Jimmy Carter, then Governor of Georgia, who spoke on government reorganization and with whom he thereafter remained in correspondence.

Soon after Turner began his two-year tenure at the War College, his paper "The United States at a Strategic Crossroads" appeared in the *Naval Institute Proceedings* (October 1972). In that paper he noted three significant changes in America's strategic environment —a movement away from a bipolar world, waning domestic support for traditional policies, and changing Soviet capabilities and strategy. He urged a greater emphasis on the "maritime option," naval strategy, arguing that "under the new strategic considerations which we must take into account . . . sea-based forces have increased applicability across the spectrum of our requirements." In December 1974 he contributed "Missions of the U.S. Navy" to *Naval Institute Proceedings*, a paper in which he pointed out that a quartet of missions had evolved—strategic deterrence, sea control, projection of power ashore, and naval presence—and concluded that naval officers "must understand the Navy's missions, continually question their rationale, and provide the intellectual basis for keeping them relevant and pertinent to the nation's needs."

By that time Turner was serving as commander of the United States Second Fleet and NATO Striking Fleet Atlantic, a post to which he had been appointed in August 1974. As Second Fleet commander, on May 12, 1975 in Boston harbor he participated in ceremonies welcoming the first Soviet warships—two guided missile destroyers, the *Boiki* and the *Zhguchi*—to visit an American port since the end of World War II. Four months later he became commander in chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe (AFSOUTH), with headquarters in Naples, Italy, and was promoted to four-star, or full, admiral.

Turner's new responsibilities were reflected in a larger concern with strategic questions. When interviewed by John K. Cooley of the *Christian Science Monitor* (June 24, 1976), he asserted that NATO was more important to the West now than in the past because of the growth of Warsaw Pact power, particularly Soviet strength. For *Foreign Affairs* (January 1977) he wrote an article, "The Naval Balance: Not Just a Numbers Game," which appeared as Congress was taking up the fiscal 1977 Pentagon budget and the nation was debating the lineup of United States-Soviet forces. Turner maintained that opposing navies could not be usefully compared in quantitative or absolute terms and that an analysis of trends was a more sensible approach to the issue of naval capabilities. The question to ask was not, "Who's ahead?" but, "Can we still undertake the old missions or perhaps take on new missions that were impossible yesterday?" He warned that the drawing of "doomsday" pictures might have a negative affect on other countries' perceptions of United States naval effectiveness: "A few extra ships in the budget or at sea may not be enough to overcome an inaccurate perception of weakness." The article was referred to repeatedly the following month when Turner was nominated as director of Central Intelligence.

Departing from Italy on an hour's notice on February 2, 1977, Turner flew to Washington to meet with President Jimmy Carter, who named him on February 7 to the dual post of primary adviser on foreign intelligence and head of the CIA. Carter's first choice as intelligence chief, Theodore Sorensen, had been opposed by foreign policy hardliners and by conservative Senators, with the result that he withdrew his name from consideration in January. Before announcing the Turner nomination, Carter had consulted with Senator Daniel K. Inouye, chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and other members of that panel.

The nomination of Turner came near the close of a period during which the CIA had been rather extensively criticized in the press and investigated by Congress for illegal activities. Since 1973 the agency had undergone two major reorganizations and had had three directors—James R. Schlesinger, William E. Colby, and George Bush—who, in the words of David Binder in the New York *Times* (November 25, 1976), had become as "interchangeable as Cabinet officers." The general reaction to Turner's nomination was favorable, when, on February 22, he testified before the Senate intelligence committee. He assured the committee that he would conduct intelligence operations "strictly in accordance with the law and American values" and that he would keep the members in-

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formed about covert operations. His aims as intelligence chief, he said, would be to provide unbiased intelligence estimates and to restore the reputation of the United States intelligence community. The committee recommended his confirmation 17-0 on February 23, and a day later the Senate unanimously confirmed his appointment. Turner was permitted to retain his Navy commission and remain on the active duty list. As Senator Inouye disclosed, he had agreed not to seek the position of chief of naval operations or chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during his tenure at the CIA, but that agreement would not prevent the President from naming him to either post.

Some reservations about how Turner might handle the intelligence assignment and whether he could control the CIA appeared in the press after his confirmation. According to an editorial in the *Nation* (March 12, 1977) on the Senate hearing, "The signs that Turner will be frank with the responsible committees of Congress about future CIA huggermugger were faint, if they appeared at all; he merely promised to 'study' the matter of protecting the civil liberties of American citizens as the CIA goes about its normal business of spying." On the subject of control, "Suetonius" of the *New Republic* (March 12, 1977), after discussing Turner's career, commented, "The troubling question—wholly unanswered in his flabby, shambling confirmation hearings—is whether even this impressive making of an admiral will enable him to run 'the Company' rather than vice-versa. . . . Bright, sophisticated, polished, apparently at ease with himself and his country's limited place on the planet, he is no Curtis LeMay railing against the sun. But he is not Billy Mitchell either. . . . For his many strengths, he remains very much a man of the system."

Representative of more positive considerations of prospects for change or reform at the CIA under Turner was Frank Getlein's observation in *Commonweal* (March 4, 1977): "I've seen him at work . . . and emerged from the experience in frank admiration of the openness of the mind to unusual suggestions, the willingness to entertain unorthodox assumptions. . . . If Turner brings the same openness to reevaluation to the CIA, it could be the most important thing to happen to the Agency since its inception and an event of great value to the country."

Among the problems pressing Turner almost as soon as he took office was that of trimming the staff over a period of six to eight years by several hundred operatives who were deemed no longer needed because of advances in the United States's technological capability for gathering intelligence. To save money and to reduce speculation among the CIA employees as to who would be dismissed, he decided to cut the time span to two years. In the fall of 1977 he began the paring by having termination notices sent to 212 agents in the directorate of operations, the agency's clandestine branch. Criticized by the expendable agents and many observers as unnecessarily brusque, that action was reported in the press to have further damaged the morale at an agency that only recently, in August, had added to its string of scandals new disclosures about its program, now defunct, of funding secret experiments on human beings in a search for methods of manipulating behavior.

With a view toward a reorganization of the overall United States intelligence operation and toward a restoration of the prestige that the CIA had once enjoyed, among other objectives, on January 24, 1978 President Carter signed an executive order to give Stansfield Turner, as Director of Central Intelligence, "full and exclusive authority" over the budgets (estimated at $7 billion) of all of the country's intelligence agencies, direct control over the CIA, and the responsibility of working through the new National Intelligence Tasking Center in assigning projects to the agencies and coordinating their activities. The various agencies besides the CIA are the FBI, the National Security Agency, State Department Intelligence, Defense Intelligence Agency, Military Intelligence, Treasury Department Intelligence, Energy Department Intelligence, and Drug Enforcement Administration.

The President's order also curbed certain kinds of covert operations that had discredited the CIA, occasionally because of misrepresentation. Assassinations and medical experimentation on unwitting human subjects were prohibited. A special coordinating committee under the chairmanship of the National Security Council director, Zbigniew Brzezinski, was given the responsibility, shared with the President, of supervising all sensitive clandestine intelligence activities. Moreover, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown retained operational control over the electronic signal interception and the satellite surveillance programs. Therefore, although Turner's power increased substantially, he could not be regarded as an intelligence czar. Shortly after the Presidential directive became known, Turner denied in an interview for *Newsweek* (February 6, 1978) that there was any problem in morale at the CIA at the present time. "This place is producing," he asserted. "The President of the United States is pleased with it. And the product is high." He went on to point out, "When you're in a period of transition to new objectives, new methods, new management systems, new styles of openness, of course there are people who are complaining, because it wasn't done the way it was yesterday."

Admiral Stansfield Turner works an average of twelve hours a day; has offices at the

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CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, as well as in the old Executive Office Building next to the White House; confers with Carter for half an hour or longer once or twice a week; and sometimes sits in on Cabinet meetings. He holds honorary degrees from Amherst, Roger Williams, Bryant, and Salve Regina colleges. His decorations include the Legion of Merit. His religion is Christian Science.

On December 23, 1953 Turner married Patricia Busby Whitney of Chicago, and they have two married children. Their daughter, Laurel, is Mrs. Frank G. Echevarria of San Diego, California, where she and her husband work in the community college system. Their son, Lieutenant Geoffrey W. Turner, is in Naval Intelligence. Of distinct military bearing, the admiral stands five feet nine and a half inches tall and weighs 185 pounds; he has blue eyes and gray hair. He is a nonsmoker and a teetotaler. To keep trim he swims, plays tennis and squash, and jogs with his dog, Hornblower, a golden retriever.

References: Cong Q p259+ F 12 '77 por; N Y Post p27 F 8 '77 por; N Y Times p20 F 8 '77; New Repub 176:10+ Mr 12 '77 por; Newsweek 91:19+ F 6 '78 pors; International Who's Who 1977-78; Who's Who in America, 1976-77

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